CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 January 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 890th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation for the cooperation shown by all delegations, which has made it possible for us to reach agreement on our agenda at the very first meeting of the year. And I would like us to build upon this good beginning in order to produce a substantive programme of work for the Conference. To that end, I intend to make the best possible use of the time available to do as much work as we can, in conformity with the rules of procedure.

I shall now suspend the plenary meeting and shall convene informal, open-ended consultations to consider the various ideas which we might have on a programme of work. We will then resume the plenary to hear any statements that delegations may wish to make. First, does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? Since I see no delegation asking for the floor, I shall now suspend the plenary meeting. We shall reconvene in 10 minutes' time in an informal session that will be open to member States and observer States only. The informal meeting will be followed by the resumed 890th plenary meeting. The plenary meeting is now suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.10 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The 890th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is now resumed.

I should like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. John Bolton, the United States Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, who will be addressing the Conference today. You have the floor, Mr. Bolton.

Mr. BOLTON (United States of America): Mr. President and distinguished delegates, it is an honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 2002 session. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming your office. I can assure you of the full support of the United States in carrying out your duties. I would also like to recognize the outstanding Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, a counterpart of mine on United Nations matters during the first Bush Administration.

It is a particular honour for me today to be able to introduce the new United States Ambassador to the Conference, Eric Javits, who comes to you after a long career specializing in what he characterizes as "difficult negotiations". He clearly has the proper background for the Conference on Disarmament and has the full support of the Bush Administration as he strives in this distinguished Conference to advance international peace and security.

Permit me to outline to this body, the world's oldest multilateral arms control negotiating forum, the fundamental elements of the Bush Administration's security policy. Our timing is particularly opportune. The 11 September terrorist attacks have made all too clear the grave

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

threats to civilized nations that come from terrorists who strike without warning, their State sponsors, and rogue States that seek weapons of mass destruction. We must defend our homelands, our forces, and our friends and allies against these threats. And we must insist on holding accountable States that violate their non-proliferation commitments.

The fight against terrorism will remain a top international security priority. As President Bush said: "Our lives, our way of life, and our every hope for the world depend on a single commitment: The authors of mass murder must be defeated, and never allowed to gain or use the weapons of mass destruction." The United States and its partners in this fight will meet this threat with every method at their disposal.

Above all, we are acting to end State sponsorship of terror. The United States believes that with very few exceptions, terrorist groups have not acquired and cannot acquire weapons of mass destruction without the support of nation-States. This support might be technical assistance. It might be funding. Perhaps such assistance has taken the form of simply turning a blind eye to terrorist camps within one's borders. But the fact that Governments which sponsor terrorist groups are also pursuing chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programmes is alarming and cannot be ignored.

Nations that assist terror are playing a dangerous game. As President Bush stated to a joint session of the United States Congress last fall: "We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."

If the 11 September terrorist attacks taught the United States nothing else, it taught us not to underestimate the intentions and capabilities of rogue States and terrorist groups. We will not be complacent to the threat of any kind of attack on the United States, especially from weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical, biological, nuclear, or from missiles.

On chemical weapons, the United States is alarmed by the continuing spread of dangerous technology to countries pursuing illegal programmes. The United States is a strong proponent of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which provides several useful tools to combat chemical warfare programmes. The United States has made effective use of the consultation provision of article IX of the Convention, to address our questions and compliance concerns. To date, we have conducted several visits at the invitation of other States parties in a cooperative effort to resolve these questions and compliance concerns. In many cases, this has proved to be highly successful.

The United States will continue to use such consultation mechanisms to enhance verification and promote full compliance with the provisions of the Convention. Although bilateral consultations are not a prerequisite for launching a challenge inspection, the United States believes that challenge inspections may in some cases be the most appropriate mechanism for resolving compliance concerns.

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

Some States parties have sought erroneously to characterize the challenge inspection process as tantamount to an abuse of political power. On the contrary, challenge inspections were included as a fundamental component of the CWC verification regime that benefits all States parties, both as a deterrent to would-be violators and as a fact-finding tool to address compliance concerns. They are a flexible and indispensable tool that, if viewed realistically and used judiciously, can be instrumental in achieving the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I caution those nations that are violating the Chemical Weapons Convention: you should not be smug in the assumption that your chemical warfare programme will never be uncovered and exposed to the international community.

On biological weapons, the United States made its position crystal-clear at the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) late last year: we will not condone violation of the BWC. We flatly oppose flawed diplomatic arrangements that purport to strengthen the BWC but actually increase the spectre of biological warfare by not effectively confronting the serious problem of BWC non-compliance. It is for this reason that the United States rejected the draft protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention and the continuation of the BWC Ad Hoc Group and its mandate, and offered an alternative way ahead.

Regarding the BWC protocol, the United States was urged to go along with this proposal because it was "flawed, but better than nothing". After an exhaustive evaluation within the United States Government, we decided that the protocol was actually counterproductive. New approaches and new ways of thinking are needed to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons.

The United States presented a number of new proposals to do just this, including tightened national export controls, fully implementing the BWC by nationally criminalizing activity that violates it, intensified non-proliferation activities, increased domestic preparedness and controls, enhanced bio-defence and counter-bio-terrorism capabilities, and innovative measures against disease outbreaks. Many, if not all of these measures, can begin to be implemented now. We look forward to discussing and refining them with all of you and hope that you will join us in endorsing and beginning to implement them as we prepare for the resumption of the BWC Review Conference next November.

On nuclear weapons, the United States recently completed a nuclear posture review, the basic conclusions of which have recently been made public. Fundamental to this review is the assumption that the United States and Russia are no longer adversaries and, therefore, that such cold war notions as mutual-assured destruction are no longer appropriate as the defining characteristic of our strategic relationship. Accordingly, President Bush has announced that the United States will reduce its strategic nuclear force to a total of between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally deployed strategic warheads over the next 10 years. President Putin has made a similarly bold and historic decision with respect to Russian Strategic nuclear forces.

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

Given the new relationship between Moscow and Washington, the spectre of nuclear war between the United States and the Russian Federation is now a comfortingly remote possibility. More likely is the possibility of the use of nuclear or radiological weapons by rogue States or terrorist groups. We are also currently faced with dangerously-high tensions in south Asia between India and Pakistan, both of which have nuclear explosive devices.

The proliferation of nuclear materials and technology is a serious threat to international security. The International Atomic Energy Agency's nuclear inspection system must be reinforced, as we press others to adopt strengthened IAEA safeguards designed to detect clandestine nuclear activities. The United States continues to emphasize the importance of universal adherence to, as well as full compliance with and implementation of, the NPT and comprehensive safeguards. Countries such as North Korea and Iraq must cease their violations of the NPT and allow IAEA to do its work. In addition, I caution those who think that they can pursue nuclear weapons without detection: the United States and its allies will prove you wrong.

And let me reiterate United States policy on nuclear weapons proliferation: the United States regards the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology as a direct threat to international security, and will treat it accordingly. The same holds true for nations that traffic in deadly chemical and biological weapons technology, and missile systems.

Almost every State that actively sponsors terror is known to be seeking weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them at longer and longer ranges. Their hope is to blackmail the civilized world into abandoning the war on terror. They want the United States and others to forsake their friends and allies and security commitments around the world. 11 September reinforced our resolve to build a limited missile-defence shield to defend our nation, friends, forces and interests against missile attacks from rogue States and terrorist organizations that wish to destroy civilized society.

It is an undeniable fact that the United States simply has no defence against a missile attack on our homeland. While we do have defences against shorter-range missiles, we have none against even a single missile launched against our cities. We must fill this void in our defences. As a result, we announced last month our decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. This was an important decision for the Bush Administration and was made in close consultation with Moscow. Although our Russian friends did not agree with our withdrawal decision, the world is aware of the close and growing relationship between our two nations. Our new strategic relationship is much broader than the ABM Treaty, as evidenced by the announcement by both the United States and Russia that we will reduce our offensive nuclear arsenals to the lowest levels in decades.

We are also concerned about the spread of missile technology that may not threaten the United States at this time, but poses serious threats to our friends and allies, as well as to deployed United States forces. Too many nations are remiss in not controlling their involvement in the proliferation of missile technology. We are aware of a long list of missile-proliferation

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

activities by enterprises from at least a dozen nations. Most of these transactions are serious, and could result in United States sanctions, as has happened several times over the past year. The United States calls on all countries to control missile-related transfers and ensure that private companies operating within their borders cease illegal missile transactions.

President Bush has made clear the imperative of restructuring deterrence and defence capabilities to formulate a comprehensive strategy to enhance our security. This strategy must include strengthening non-proliferation measures (prevention), more robust counter-proliferation capabilities (protection), and a new concept of deterrence, relying more on missile defence and less on offensive nuclear forces.

In this context, the security and well-being of the United States and its allies depend on the ability to operate in space. America is committed to the exploration and use of outer space by all nations for peaceful purposes for the benefit of humanity - purposes that allow defence and intelligence-related activities in pursuit of national security goals. We remain firmly committed to the Outer Space Treaty, and we believe that the current international regime regulating the use of space meets all our purposes. We see no need for new agreements.

This point leads me to touch briefly on the future of this body, the Conference on Disarmament. If it remains deadlocked in futility, it will continue to lose credibility and the attention of the world. To be productive and contribute to international security, the Conference must change the way it does business. It must focus on new threats, such as efforts by terrorist groups to acquire weapons of mass destruction. It must squarely face the serious problem of violations of weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation regimes and treaties. Finally, in order to perform a useful function, the Conference on Disarmament must put aside irreconcilable differences and work on issues that are ready for negotiation, such as a fissile material cut-off treaty. I know of no one more qualified to help lead a new approach here in the Conference on Disarmament than Eric Javits, who has already begun working with delegates to find ways to move this body forward in 2002.

I have one personal favour to ask the distinguished delegates in this room. It has become fashionable to characterize my country as "unilateralist" and against all arms control agreements. Nonetheless, our commitment to multilateral regimes to promote non-proliferation and international security has never been as strong as it is today, through numerous arms control treaties and non-proliferation arrangements, including the NPT, CFE, CWC, BWC, LTBT, PNET and the TTBT, as well as to non-proliferation regimes like the Zangger Committee, the NSG, MTCR, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group. In fact, trying to characterize our policy as "unilateralist" or "multilateralist" is a futile exercise. Our policy is, quite simply, pro-American, as you would expect.

The main emphasis of the Bush Administration's arms control policy is the determination to enforce existing treaties, and to seek treaties and arrangements that meet today's threats to peace and stability, not yesterday's. Fundamental to the Bush Administration's policy is the

commitment to honour our arms control agreements, and to insist that other nations live up to them as well. Now is the time for the Conference on Disarmament to build on its achievements to forge additional restraints against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. This is Ambassador Javit's mission here, for which he has my full support and that of my Government.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank you for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Iraq. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. AL-NIMA (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. First of all I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of this important Conference. I wish you every success in conducting the work of this session.

Mr. President, I feel it is necessary to clarify my country's position with regard to the allegation made in the statement by the United States representative.

It is clear that the United States position towards Iraq is a hostile one. The allegation contained in the statement by the representative of the United States of America is not based on an objective position. We therefore ask the members of the Conference to be very wary of taking the allegation at face value.

The United States representative says that Iraq has violated the Non-Proliferation Treaty and prevented the International Atomic Energy Agency from doings its work properly. Not only is this claim untrue, it is also inconsistent with the facts. The reports submitted by the International Atomic Energy Agency to the Security Council since 1992 have shown that Iraq does not have any nuclear materials. The United States of America prevented the Security Council from adopting the Agency's most recent report, which was submitted to the Council in July 1998 and quite clearly stated that Iraq had fulfilled its obligations under Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

Iraq reaffirms its commitment to the NPT. Members of the Agency have visited Iraq to check whether there are any nuclear materials left in Iraq. Iraq, in accordance with its international commitments under the NPT, reaffirms its willingness to engage in this type of cooperation as well as its commitment to these international instruments.

The speaker's words reveal the double standards which are constantly at play. He has maligned two countries by accusing them of violating the NPT, but made no mention of other countries that have violated that treaty, because they are friends of the United States of America. I refer in particular to the Zionist entity, that has scores of nuclear weapons, representing a grave threat to peace and security in the Middle East. Yet he made not a single reference to that entity. He did not even ask it to open up its nuclear facilities to international inspectors. I would like to remind the United States representative of the provisions of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) calling for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from nuclear weapons. What has his country done to implement that paragraph in order to preserve international peace and security?

(Mr. Al-Nima, Iraq)

In conclusion, I should like to draw attention to the irresponsible policies pursued by the United States of America on the issue of disarmament, particularly its recent abrogation of the ABM Treaty concluded between the United States of America and the Soviet Union in 1972, after six years of hard negotiations. The United States of America has also categorically rejected the Biological Weapons Convention Protocol. Its policies have had a negative impact on the work of the Conference, and its selectivity has undermined its work as a whole.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Thank you for that statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea now has the floor.

Mr. RI (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you, as I am speaking for the first time, on your assumption of the presidency. My delegation will, of course, make a formal statement on the matters raised by the United States delegation, but briefly I would just like to respond to some points.

My delegation categorically denies the allegations made by the United States delegation, by Mr. Bolton, with regard to my country. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is complying and fulfilling its obligations stipulated in the agreement signed between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States in 1994. We suspended our nuclear-power stations and facilities listed in the agreement under the surveillance of the IAEA, and, furthermore, an IAEA delegation was recently invited to our country to see some additional nuclear laboratories. This is our flexibility with the agreement. Because of the shutdown of our national power stations, we are experiencing heavy losses. We lack electricity and because of this lack, our economy and industry are suffering greatly.

Even though up to now we have been scrupulously fulfilling our obligations, the United States, on the contrary, has not shown the same spirit. For example, under the agreement, the United States is responsible for building two reactors in my country by 2003. Now the United States is saying that the two reactors cannot be finished at least until 2007, and the heavy oil that is supposed to be supplied by the United States under the agreement is sometimes delayed by between two and six months, and sometimes there is friction between Congress and the Administration. Because of this we cannot get the heavy oil in time. It causes a great deal of difficulty in our economy.

In spite of this the United States continues to make allegations and criticizes our country for not fulfilling our obligations and of other things. All this is totally unacceptable. Our country is small, divided and weak, and the United States is a super-Power, and they can do whatever they wish, and yet they still say that our country is a threat to the United States. The United States cannot sell these ideas to anybody. Our Government clearly states that we have no intention of attacking any country or threatening any country in the world, unless we are attacked

(Mr. Ri, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

by somebody - be it even the United States or anyone else in the world. We will not tolerate any kind of threat or invasion. We will fight to the last person. This is the position of our Government. What I would like to say is that the United States does not need to make such allegations in international meetings - allegations which cannot possibly be accepted by anybody.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Thank you for your statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see that no delegation is asking for the floor and, therefore, we have concluded our work for this meeting. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 31 January 2002.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.